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Prayer Book Revision

DR LOWTHER CLARKE has done the Church an outstanding service by his little book, *The Prayer Book of 1928 Reconsidered* (S.P.C.K., 3s.). It is a minute examination, after more than a decade of permissible use, of the rejected Prayer Book of 1928. It goes through its changes and additions detail by detail. In no sense and at no place is it partisan; it is a scholarly, detached and practical piece of criticism, meticulous indeed, but properly so, as a contribution to a book which, above all books, must be rendered above criticism. Only towards the end of the volume does the author stray from the immediate task, first, with a brief history of the course of the Revision, and then with an all too short summary of "conclusions," dealing with the causes of the failure in Parliament and the Church, and with possible ways of tackling the future revision that must be.

To criticize in turn so careful and judicious a criticism were scarcely profitable. Instead let us review some of the larger problems that rise out of Dr Lowther Clarke's survey; such as the need, the principles, the methods and the scope of Prayer Book revision, helping ourselves to his wisdom as we proceed.

I. *The Need of revision.* Where do we stand at the moment? Some would answer, "In chaos." But on a longer view, we believe it more true to say, "At a stage as hopeful as it is necessary." It may be, for instance, that there are some 600 allowable ways under present conditions of saying Matins on Sunday morning, if it be followed by another Prayer Book service; but most of these are differences in detail which trouble nobody and scarcely affect the liturgical Office as such; it remains Prayer Book Matins and nothing else. The number of these variations would be reduced by a better thinking out of directive rubrics; the author's examination of their present inconsistencies is not the least valuable part of his critique. The longer view, however, can justly hold that a multitude of permissible variations is inevitable while a new order is being run experimentally alongside and with the old, inevitable during that period of *test by actual use* which stormy experience has taught us to be the only sane prerequisite of liturgical revision.

The 1928 Book, in fact, has become a temporary text of permissible variations, and so we stand in an unconfessed period of test by use. We have secured in a disorderly roundabout way what the Scottish and South African Churches possess by straightforward and canonical ordering—a season of experimental test. The difference, which is all in favour of the daughter Communions, goes this much further, that a term is set to their testings, and none to ours. The strain of the rejections of 1927 and 1928, and the strain of a long, controversial prepara-

tion, has left the Bishops, and perhaps the whole Church, with a sheer fright of tackling revision again. The best way of dealing with such fear is *to tackle it again as soon as possible* in a wiser fashion. The present position, though not excessively painful, is really dangerous. The whole discipline of common worship is at stake. As that is impaired, so also are all the disciplines of the corporate and Catholic body. That would be less the case if, by the appointment of a new Prayer Book Commission or otherwise, the Church was led to understand that the period of licence was *temporary*, and for a positive, experimental purpose only, to serve the restoration of common order in worship on the fuller lines which a new age and a larger liturgical scholarship and experience can fairly demand.

The danger before us is now seen to be something deeper than that of discouraging churchgoers by a bewildering variety of uses, or than that of making every priest a law unto himself as he approaches the Holy Place. Too much variety, too great an individual liberty, too little conscience toward a common order, is working *to deprive the faithful, and the English nation as a whole, of historic Christian devotion altogether.* The public demand clamours more and more for "the simple service," by which is meant a bevy of hymns (the latest, not the least attractive, but the least responsible claimants to liturgical place), divided by a Lesson, an Address, and, in the background, a few prayers. The sense of liturgy is fading amongst us, just as the Free Churchmen are finding the need of it. Liturgy, after all, stands for *Scriptural* worship, rich and varied in its devotional components, and full in its doctrinal compass. Dr Lowther Clarke aptly quotes *The Screwtape Letters*:

> The warning of a highly intelligent enemy of mankind should be remembered: "In order to spare the laity all 'difficulties' he (a certain Vicar) has deserted both the Lectionary and the appointed Psalms and now, without noticing it, revolves endlessly round the little treadmill of his fifteen favourite Psalms and twenty favourite Lessons. We are thus safe from the danger that any truth not already familiar to him and his flock should ever reach them through the Scriptures."

The instructed laity seem to be more alive to this danger than many clergy, and on both the short and long views their demand for the Prayer Book services in their substantial integrity should be scrupulously heeded. Liturgical order and liturgical conscience walk together.

Twelve years of trial have made generally clear what is acceptable and what unacceptable in the 1928 changes. The Orders of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Visitation of the Sick and Burial rank among the former, albeit each is plainly susceptible of improvement on re-revision; the new Canon among the latter. In details the acceptable and unacceptable have likewise become apparent. Between these, there are provinces where the additions are in intention excellent, but in execution, not; the alternative General Confession, for instance, and the Occasional Prayers. But no more than the author are we concerned to discuss the good and evil of this or that change; rather let us emphasize with him that which was not clear during the previous revision, the principles on which it were wise, beneficial and safest to attempt it again.

II. *The Principles of revision.* These principles seem to be six, the first four of which are of paramount importance.

1. The only object before the Revisers and Church must be *the worship of God.* Never again must revision be mixed up with disciplinary legislation by rubric. "The deepest reason for the failure was that the whole method was from the very beginning wrong," wrote Dr Bell, in his Life of Archbishop Davidson.[1] "The revision of Church services and the enforcement of ecclesiastical discipline are different things. A revision of worship, of common prayer, which is intended from the start to be used as an instrument for stopping disobedience is . . . not likely to produce the happiest results in the realm of worship!"

That is a final judgment. But a good revision would go further; and so completely treat rubrics as a directory of service-order that even lawyers will cease to regard them as a code of law. Could the rubrics be so liberated, they could be given here and there a wider function, of *explanation*, especially in the Occasional Offices, which, in these uninstructed days, would be a valuable contribution to intelligent worship.

2. Secondly, revision must be *liturgical.* It is a complete mistake to oppose the "simple" to the "liturgical" service. So long as *a congregation has the printed order before them*, no service is difficult. It may be good or bad, pointless or concentrated, profound or superficial, but not difficult. One reason for the idea that hymns are "simple" is just that the congregation can turn to them in a hymnbook. Confessions, thanksgivings, acts, litanies, versicles, responsories, all the diverse and gracious forms of historic prayer are no less "simple," singly or together in any apt combination, when they can be set *in print* before the congregation. A Prayer Book is the guarantee of liturgy—that is, of worship that is *scriptural*, *historical*, *seasonal and structural.* Critics of the liturgical do not always notice how it lives and moves and has its whole being in the Scriptures. The historical, traditional "forms" of public devotion are not only exceedingly rich and varied, but also proved by the centuries. The Christian Year ensures fulness of credal content as well as the constant change of subject and mood. And structure adds intelligence, cohesion and strength to the whole act. In saying this, we are protesting against the dangerous tendency of today, mentioned above, rather than against the revision of 1928, which firmly put aside the wilder radicalism of last war's padres, and stayed upon the ancient ways. Nothing must be done further to deprive Christianity in this country of its full devotional inheritance.

3. Thirdly, the diction and dignity of accepted revision must not fall below the standards of 1662. This is not a mere literary demand, nor yet one for a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century style. The diction of today at its best will walk hand in hand with Cranmer; for, at its best, English still derives from the Authorized Version and Prayer Book. The demand for an august standard of language arises immediately from the august use to which it ministers. Both words and silence are sacramentals of worship, therefore let the words be good—and their

[1] *Randall Davidson*, p. 1357.

rhythm. For at least two reasons. Language is powerful to convey the numinous; dignity, nay, majesty of language is the proper instrument and agent of corporate intercourse with the Divine and All-holy, and moves in a deeper sphere than the emotions. And again, only such language will bear the test of constant repetition, and deepen and unfold with it. Yet again, the grandest English is not unsimple—as the Gospels witness on every page.

The 1928 Revision, with some exceptions, did fail here. It might actually have added to the splendour of 1662, but (in rhythm even more than in expression) it fell below. As the Dean of Winchester's preface states, the turgid, the sentimental and the slipshod "got through in large quantities."

4. Fourthly, too much must not be attempted at once. Bishop Pollock may have been moved by a desire to avoid controversial isssues when throughout the revision he urged concentration upon one section at a time, and the presentation to Parliament of those parts only which commanded general agreement. The arguments against such a course then seemed decisive; but they would be invalid if the Church were to proceed on her own volition, unhampered by Letters of Business and considerations of ecclesiastical discipline. If re-revision could be put in hand according to the suggestions made later in this paper, it would be wise to deal singly and separately, so far as it was possible, with the Daily Offices, the Occasional Offices, the Ordinal, the Kalendar and the Eucharist, just as the Lectionary has always been dealt with separately. It would seem a slow process, but it could not be slower than the 1928 Revision proved to be, both in preparation and result. The "Deposited Book" (strange title!) has, however, so far cleared the ground, that the next revisers can work to experience as well as to the safeguard of a period of test in use, which should make for greater speed no less than for a surer result.

These are the first four principles, we believe, of good revision. There are others of less vital character.

5. Close touch should be kept with the revisionary committees of other Anglican Communions, so that unnecessary divergence be reduced to a minimum. The closer the Anglican liturgies can be kept to one another, in details no less than the larger frames, the better. The mother should not be too proud to adopt improvements from daughters that are now of age.

6. Immense help could be given by the three privileged Presses if, in consultation with any Revising Committee, agreed and joint improvements could be made in arrangement and set-out. It may be too much to hope for a uniform numbering of pages in all the mass editions, so that, where advisable, page numbers could be given out like hymns. But in the book itself, the room for simplified arrangement is considerable. The preliminary matter, before any service begins, runs in the 1928 Book to 76 pages. That is absurd. Paginal reference could be made to many elements, rarely used, which interrupt the ordinary flow of the office and are, or could be, printed elsewhere (*e.g.*, *Pss 98* and *67* in Evensong; the long Exhortation in the Eucharist).[1]

[1] *The Churchpeople's Prayer Book*, prepared by the Bishop of Monmouth for the Church in Wales, has made a first essay in this direction.

III. *The Method of revision.* Certainly the cumbrous and fatiguing methods adopted from 1906 to 1927 must not be repeated. Indeed, if opportunity for experiment in actual use is to be provided, the whole procedure must be less portentous, altogether more fluid and rational. It would at once or presently remove the *fear* from the process of revision, if it were made *a familiar and continuous factor in Church life*—as the care for her forms of worship should be. Other reasons—such as the preparation of official devotions on National Days of Prayer—make the suggestion of a permanent Liturgical and Revisionary Commission, set up by the Archbishops or Convocations, seem overdue. Such a Commission could report regularly every seven or ten years; its recommendations after discussion and amendment in Convocation and Assembly (for not longer than one year) should become permissible use for the seven or ten years succeeding—that is, for a time of proving. The Commission should be concerned, of course, only with liturgy and worship, not at all with discipline. This is the system, roughly, which the Episcopal Church in Scotland has followed to great advantage. Parliament is hardly likely to review the modest periodical recommendations as to details of worship suggested only for experimental use over a limited term. Certain difficulties would be caused to the privileged Presses, which would thus be faced with a new edition every so many years; but what is foreseen (as a change in the Royal Succession cannot be) can be provided against. The advantages, on the other hand, would be immense and many-sided. Liturgical worship, while always remaining conservative, would cease to be static. The Church would rapidly become experienced in adjustment and unworried by it. The Convocations would be given regular and proper work to do. The Commission would soon be seised of the feeling and needs of the worshipping Church. Fear would vanish with familiarity; controversy, it may well be hoped, pass into constructiveness. Liturgical scholarship and the simplest lessons of prayer would alike receive encouragement. The benefit by instruction to the worship of the whole Anglican Communion might be great: the one fruitful influence of the revisionary movement in the decade 1918-28 came out of the new understanding of the Prayer Book services taught by parish priests to congregations ready to learn; there would be constant reason to continue such teaching. The Commission need and should not be big—especially if it have the further function of acting quickly for the Archbishops on national emergencies—so long as it be truly expert both in ancient devotion and modern experience.

IV. *The Scope of revision* is defined generally by the existing contents of the Prayer Book. These cover two areas: the order and administration of the sacramental rites; and the Morning and Evening Offices and Intercessions, by which priest, cathedral and parish church consecrate every day to God. This would make but a small manual but for the entry of the Christian Year, with its glowing throng of variations, to diversify and colour the invariable structures. The Prayer Book must sanctify not only the day and month, but the year and the span of man's life, and minister to him the pledged gifts of God; in forms which either descend from Apostolic days or sum up the devo-

tional experience of the Christian centuries. It has to provide the *staples* of full Christian worship; we must not look to it, except indirectly as an exemplar, for a Mothers' Union, or Youth, or "Industrial" service. A Harvest Thanksgiving, on the other hand, might well find place, since it has rightly become an incident in the Church's Year, particularly if, by giving it a structure which is not that of Matins or Evensong, another good liturgical pattern could be introduced by way of so popular a service. That had been a more useful attempt in 1928 than to reintroduce Prime, for which no demand existed, and which has had no use other than as an ingenious if cowardly way of shelving the *Quicunque Vult.*

This would appear to leave to a Revision only limited scope. We all know that in practice that is not the case. Dr Lowther Clarke's critique shows how much there is to be done, not how little, and with what exceeding care even the smallest things must be treated. For liturgy matters not only for today, but tells, with power, over long spaces of time. A Revisionary Commission would have to deal, sooner or later, with such main points as these:

1. Improvement in the rubrical directions. Dr Clarke is deliberately "super-critical" over these. He is right. Such directions as are given in the Prayer Book should leave no doubt as to their interpretation, so far as it concerns the content or manner of worship.

2. Improvement of the additions and innovations of 1928 which have proved themselves acceptable. These range from so large a change as the introduction of a Sunday cycle of Matins and Evensong with its own proper Psalms and Lessons, to small details. I think it true to say that the former is definitely established, and with good reason; none the less, it needs to be overhauled, especially its Lectionary, to fit it better for its task. So too with details: *e.g.*, if the Introductory Sentences before Matins and Evensong are to receive a seasonal character, they could be made more complete and, in some places, be better chosen.

3. Improvement in "literary" quality: particularly desirable in many of the Occasional Prayers and Collects of the Lesser Feasts. This is not merely or mainly a question of letters; it is far more important than that. A prayer of undistinguished expression and, above all, of poor rhythm, has not the lasting quality essential to the repetitionary character of liturgy; and somehow is not "heard" by the listening congregation; much less, loved.

4. Omission of insertions which have not stood the test of use or usefulness; such as Prime, and the Devotion before Holy Communion—which should appear in its full traditional form with *Confiteor* or not at all.

5. Additions. There is still plenty of room for the exercise of liturgical skill and imagination—if and when these rare gifts appear—in perfecting and enriching the Book of 1662 along its own true lines. The 1928 Book did not solve (by the overworked Ps 51) the problem of an alternative Canticle for *Te Deum* or *Benedicite* in Lent and, above all, Holy Week. One day a warmer and richer Holy Week liturgy may be provided; a best boon. Voids in Prayer Book provision might well

be filled by Litanies of Missionary Intercession and of the English Saints; excellent forms of these exist, utterly different from Cranmer's, and they might help to restore popularity to the Litany form. These are but examples of many "creative" possibilities of enlarging the frame of our habitual worship.

V. In so general a review as this, it were not fitting to say much of the two large issues of the Lectionary and the Canon. To deal with the former, which has secured a "departmental independence," the Convocation of Canterbury has already set up a Commission. As for the latter, it seems to the writer that the failure of the 1928 Canon proves decisively that no Canon can secure general acceptance, not even that of 1549, which makes anything except the smallest divergence from that of 1662. Such divergence may be that of a permissible change of order and permissible addition of an anamnesis; both clergy and laity, in vast majority, would, I am convinced, prefer to keep to the familiar language and prayers, while not averse to improvements, by no means inconsiderable, which could be made *within that range*. At any rate, that should be the first step to take.

A further issue arises out of the provision of Propers for Lesser Feasts and Festivals. The only difficulty here is that of *bulk*. The demand is wholly desirable, but it is not desirable to make the size of the Prayer Book larger and more complex, for the sake of that which mainly concerns the devout minority. Following the example of the Lectionary, this might be made a "department," with an *index only* of Propers in the Prayer Book itself, such as the 1928 Book made for those of Lent, but which should be printed in full in all official Missals. This would be a real contribution to liturgical and devotional enrichment, and do much to heal the disease, peculiar in Christendom to the Church of England, of unauthorized and often bewildering Altar Books.

VI. But if the Prayer Book is to maintain its influence as the norm and fount and guide of Anglican corporate prayer, and if its function is to make available for Church and country the full treasures of historic Christian devotion, a new issue has arisen in modern Church life which is not likely to grow less important with time. It is the demand for all sorts and conditions of "Special Services." For these the clergy, at present, for lack of skilled guidance, are driven either to a "mutilated Matins" or to a devotion, based chiefly on a string of hymns, of little depth, structure or coherence. Many of these services fall no longer within the category of "devotional guilds," but are of national importance and influence. The Church ought to frame them with a more practised hand and profounder content. Obviously services of such varied reference cannot find place in the Prayer Book, and yet the Prayer Book alone can give the authoritative, general and ever-available guidance needed for their betterment. The 1928 Book included an "Appendix." I suggest that a first work of any Revisionary Commission should be to provide an Appendix of good forms, on which the clergy responsible for framing such Special Services could draw both for structure and details. The authority of Convocation would suffice for such an Appendix, which would have a status lying between that

of the Prayer Book proper and that of any collection of hymns which may be bound up with it. But the opportunities it would give for semi-liturgical and devotional enrichment might be very great indeed, and permeate the whole religious life of the country.

VII. Such are some of the reflections to which Dr Lowther Clarke's timely, thorough and illuminating "reconsideration" of the 1928 Prayer Book leads us. It has reopened and challenged the Church to duties vital to its life and mission. We hope that it will be widely studied, and that it will serve at once to discredit the vanity of the controversial atmosphere in Prayer Book revision, and to create a new vision of the fruitfulness and greater peace that may come to the Church through a fresh and wiser approach to it in the near future.

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York.

Private Patronage in 1699

On the first of August, 1699, there died Phinehas Mace, Rector of Barlborough in Derbyshire. His ministry seems to have endeared him to his flock; for the monument to his memory records that he was *a vicinis non minus quam uxore deploratus*. The patronage of the vacant living was in the hands of Sir John Rodes, fourth and last baronet of his line, and owner of Barlborough Hall. He was a bachelor, with a pious and affectionate mother. Both belonged to the Quaker circle, and were intimately associated with William Penn.

Sir John Rodes preserved a number of letters that he received during the five months for which the benefice remained vacant. Mrs H. E. Rimington-Wilson, the last of the Rodes family to own Barlborough Hall, has kindly given permission for extracts from these letters to be published.

First in the field of candidates was James Cooke, a young Oxford graduate who had been appointed a year earlier to the rectory of Warmsworth, near Doncaster. On August 9 he addressed his application to Sir John.

> The Parsonage at Balbrough being now vacant as I am informed, I presume upon our former acquaintance at the School of Sheffield, to make my request to you for it. I have not had the honour of being known to you of late yeares; and therefore I desired my friend and neighbour Thomas Aldam to give you his opinion of me. If he has given a good character of me I will endeavour by my actions to make it appeare to be true. And this freedom I must take to acquaint you that I have hitherto given no occasion to my neighbours to think otherwise of me than as a Lover of peace; and I do promise to be the same man. I cannot think but you will rather chuse to present some person yourselfe to your own parish than suffer the presentation to lapse to the Bp. for so one altogether unknown or such a one as you would not like may be imposed upon you.

Thomas Aldam was an influential Quaker living at Warmsworth. He supported Cooke's application with a somewhat tepid testimonial.

I tould him I would let thee know, soe far, as that I believed he was a man inclinable to live peaceably with his neighbours, and if thou resolved to present one (which I question'd) or leave it to the people to chuse for themselves, I doe not know but he may be as fitt as another under those circumstances; I desire thee to weigh the matter and be fully satisfyed in the thing before thou conclude anything.

The good offices of Thomas Aldam were sought again a few days later. The candidate this time was Thomas Bosvile, a Cambridge don, the son of a neighbouring incumbent. His father wrote a letter to Aldam, which evidently was forwarded to Sir John.

My son went to Balb: where he found that Sr Jno. Rhodes was come home but was advised before he waited on him to make his address by some friends. . . . Your hearty undertakinge would I persuade myselfe goe a great way, and since the thinge must be to find body qualified to accept it, I hope you nor others will ever have blame for recommendinge my son whose character both as to his naturall endowments and their improvement, as also his unblameable conversation as to moralls its not so proper for me to give; but if Sr Jno or you have opportunity to make enquirie of his behaivour and reputation in the University where he hath been more than 13 years and severall of them fellow of St. Jno Coll: I doubt not but it will be to your satisfaction. . . . Give me leave to suggest that Sr Jno being a man of honour will I fancy have some respect to a family and not be of Jerob: humour to make the lowest of the people his parish priest. I shall conclude with telling you my hopes that my son will persevere in his moderation as to such as can not altogether think with him in matters of Religion. I hope he will love such as live well and love our Ld Jes X in sincerity tho they may differ from him in the manner of the manifestation of it according to their light and apprehensions of things. . . . If there be any hope in the thinge my son will come over the next Ld's day and preach at Balbro that so the people may have some knowledg of him for so I persuade myselfe that Sr Jno is one of those honest patrons who would willingly gratify his parish in all reasonable things.

Bosvile's efforts, however, were unsuccessful. Meanwhile there was much speculation among the villagers. This appears from a letter which Lady Rodes addressed to her son at the beginning of September.

There is great wondering who must have the place at Balbrough they ask me if I know and I tell them no and I tell them I think thou does not know yet thyself but art considering of it. I perceive Parson Chantry lies very near them still, their desire is very fervent for his prevailing for the place. Thou has a hard task in hand how to please a multitude and thyself too. I am sorry for thee but cannot direct nor help. Therefore leaves thee to the Mighte Wonderfull Counseller who is able to instruct thee desiring thou may alwayes wait for his Counsell to direct thee at all times.

Chantry was Rector of the adjoining parish of Clowne, and was about to be married to the daughter of Phinehas Mace.

The next candidate to appear is a somewhat obsequious person of the name of Timothy Ellisonne, who held a cure at Coley near to Halifax.

I have been strongly moved by the Spirit to write these few lines to your Worship to signifye to you my earnest desire to be your Clerke. I hope your Worship would never have reason to repent of your choice for I have always

in the whole course of my ministry made it my business to preach well and live well. And I have always exercised a tenderness and respect to all Christians that differ from me. . . . Being a stranger to you I will both for your owne and the people's satisfaction bring testimonialls with me under the best Gentlemens hands in our Country, of my diligence in the ministeriall work and of my innocency of life and of my moderation. And likewise under the hands of your Worship's friends in these parts from whom I have always received great civilities and kindnesses which I acknowledge with thankfulness, and whom I must confess to come the nearest to the primitive and best Christians for humility modesty charity exact justice fidelity and regularity of life. . . . If your Worship please the Archbyshop of York will write and certifye me to whom I am well known and with whom I am well acquainted I preached before him the fourth of August.

Nothing more is heard of this aspirant. The admiration which he expressed for the Quakers did not have the desired effect upon Sir John. Possibly the Archbishop reported unfavourably on the sermon.

September and October passed without an appointment being made. The living appears to have been offered to a man named Haines of Boston; the Rodes family had Lincolnshire connections, and Sir John's mother lived in that county. Lady Rodes wrote on October 22, giving the report of some friends who had conveyed the offer:

Mr Haines has not excepted of Balbrough living but hath taken time to consider of it, they teld him Balbrough was A Good Heir and he said he had his health very well where he was. They did not find that he was enclinable to remove, he is settled at boston where he has good company and he its like thinks Balbrough A Dull place. . . . If he should not accept of Balbrough living I wish you would present Buckingham I know he is a plain man but in bestowing it of him thou would oblige A friend that would be ready upon all occations to serve thee when I see thee I shall tell thee who it is, if thou would doe it upon my request I should take it as A signall testimony of thy Loving-kindness to me, he is an Ancient man and by Course of Nature cannot live long, and so it would be sooner at libertie to present again.

But Sir John turned a deaf ear to his mother's plea for the appointment of the plain and ancient Buckingham.

Across the Yorkshire border, but quite near to Barlborough, lie the parishes of Harthill and Todwick. A certain Samuel Ferrand was at this time Rector of Todwick, and he desired to move to Barlborough. He obtained support from the Rector of Harthill and from a Quaker of the name of Myers.

The Rector of Harthill, John Hewytt by name, is chiefly concerned about the impression that Ferrand's appointment would make upon his own patron, the Duke of Leeds.

I make bold (pardon, Sr, my great presumption) to recommend to your choice a worthy neighbour of ours, one of my Lord Duke's Chaplains, Mr Ferrand Rector of Todwick. He is a person I esteem very much, and were I to leave Harthill, I should rejoice to procure his Succession to it. As for his Preaching to my own knowledge 'tis sound Orthodox and learned; his Deportment obliging and courteous, and his way of living very prudent and ornamental; insomuch that I have often been concerned his preferment is not adequate to his worth. Besides his Relations in the north are considerably valuable both for their estate and integrity, his ffather and eldest Brother being

worth 1200 pounds per annum between 'em; both of whom I am sure will express their gratitude to your Worshipp with all imaginable acknowledgments. But I may venture to raise an argument from an higher Topick, viz: that if your worship condescends to grant this ffavour, 'twill in a very high degree oblige my Lord Duke of Leeds, who has often promised viva voce and by Letter to do him a kindness; so that if out of respect to his Grace your worship thinks fitt to prefer him to Balbrough, I am sure my Lord will double his esteem of your worship, and I am confident will be ready to retaliate so great a favour.

Myers wrote to Sir John at considerable length. He was even more cautious than Aldam in offering his recommendation.

I was lately solicited very earnestly to write unto thee by a neighbour of mine, Robert fferrand, on the behalf of one Sam fferrand his brother who has some place at Todicke as I understand him not farr from thy house; He shows me a letter from his brother intimating that there is lately fallen there away some place or benefitt (as they call 'em) of the Church of England, which thou is by law entitled to, As to present some person to officiate there, in their way . . . Now in answer to this I told him plainely that I neither could nor would bee concerned in it to advise or persuade thee to medle in any such thing, fforas we could not owne that ministry, as believing 'em noe way serviceable to the people, soe we would not have any hand in procureing places and preferments for 'em. . . . Nor doe I think that thou will incline to it either, But rather lett the thing lapse by doing nothing And let the Bishopp doe what he pleases in it . . . As to Sam fferrand I have no acquaintance with him at all nor doe I know him other than that I once saw him at his uncle Dawsons, for this Sam fferrand's mother was Joshua Dawson's wife's sister (A Friend of our meeting). Now as to his father Ben. fferrand and his mother they are very sober orderly people . . . and I do not see but that it is likely that the said Samuel might bee orderly in that place according to their way for anything I have knowne.

To add to the patron's troubles, a hint reached him that some corrupt influences were at work in favour of a candidate whose identity is not disclosed. Richard Disney, Rector of Bloxholm in Lincolnshire (the parish to which Lady Rodes belonged), wrote to Sir John early in November, and referred to a conversation which he had had with the agent of the Barlborough estates some time before the death of Phinehas Mace. The agent had asked Disney if, in the event of the living becoming vacant, he would accept it, the value being £120. The letter continues:

My answer was there is no doubt . . . But a fair promise of shining gold being offered he has (I hear) since been active as flames in making an intercession for another, and like them endeavouring to destroy all that should oppose his arts.

The method of destruction, Disney went on to explain, was to malign himself and Chantry by reporting some scandalous conversation regarding Sir John, which had been overheard at the "feast" at Elmton, a village near to Barlborough.

In the end Sir John Rodes submitted his problem to the judgment of the Barlborough people. He prepared what in modern parlance would be called a short list, containing three names. Ferrand was one,

included no doubt in deference to my Lord Duke; Cooke was another; and the third was a man named Jackson, who appears now for the first time. Something in the nature of "trial sermons" was arranged. Sir John was away in London, and a report of the proceedings reached him through a letter from his mother.

I was glad to hear the Duke was so civil to thee in hopes it will end in some greater kindness than words, as for the Parson of Todwicke they say he is not to be lik'd. Therefore I would not have thee think of him, they like Cook's preaching extraordinary well, but they make great account of Jackson's Charitableness which makes them encline to him. . . . I heard by one that came from that side where Cook lives & they commended him for A very good housekeeper & good to the poor & they say he has sevenscore pound a year I would fain have the resolve of some body now for I have no mind to have it fall into the Bishops hands to present.

One might have expected that the charitableness of Jackson would turn the scale in his favour; but it was James Cooke who received the presentation, and he was instituted in January to the cure of souls in Barlborough. He held the living until his death in 1733. No monument exists to indicate whether at his end he was, like his predecessor, *a vicinis deploratus*.

E. G. Walmsley.

Barlborough, Chesterfield.

The Household of Faith[1]

Perturbation prevails in the household of faith at the present time; and a bewildering variety of voices iterate with even greater emphasis and urgency the admonition of Lord Grey to the bishops more than a century ago "to set their house in order." But even so their witness agrees not together. It is difficult amidst the prevailing Babel to ascertain the true measure of reform which may be either necessary or practicable. A great deal of confusion arises from simple ignorance of the history of the Church of England. The household of God has come into close contact with them that are of Cæsar's household, and the tangled history of the relations of Church and State lies at the root of most of the questions of reform. It is easy to cry for a new start; but a Church which values its own continuity must take care to preserve the principles underlying its constitution even when recognizing the necessity of change.

It is the outstanding merit of *Thy Household the Church* that it is soundly based on recognition of this historical situation. Particularly the essays of Dr Jalland, Mr Kemp, and Mr Mortimer set contemporary problems in the light of history. Dr Jalland has no difficulty in showing that "the view that in the diocesan synod the bishop is the sole legislator has the better claim to be regarded as a catholic principle"; and his

[1] *Thy Household the Church*, edited by V. A. Demant, Dacre Press, 3s. 6d.; Church Assembly Report of the Commission on the Remuneration and Housing of the Clergy, C.A.719, S.P.C.K., 6d.

sketch of the development of diocesan synods and of the English Provincial Convocations provides a sound basis for suggestions of practical reform. Mr Kemp writes a lucid and succinct chapter on Canon Law and the ecclesiastical courts, and Mr Mortimer compresses an astonishing amount of information into his description of "How we get our Bishops." I hope it may not be impertinent for a reader whose chief interest, like theirs, is in Church history to express his delight and pleasure in the reading of these chapters. As may be expected from such an approach, the reforms advocated are characterized generally by moderation and sobriety. They cover a wider field than those recommended in the Church Assembly Report of the Commission on the Remuneration and Housing of the Clergy; and it may be convenient to deal first with the wider issues and to turn finally to the specific points which are common to both publications.

With many of the reforms proposed by Dr Demant's group of clergy general agreement may be expected. The separation of the Convocations from dependence upon parliamentary sessions and elections is desirable and not difficult. The same is the case with Dr Jalland's suggestions for the reassociation of diocesan synods with episcopal visitations, and the grant of wider powers of deliberation to the Convocations, and with Mr Kemp's recommendations in regard to the rehabilitation of the Canon Law with due provision for its study and in regard to the reform of ecclesiastical courts. Mr Mortimer is conservative in his attitude to the present method of the appointment of bishops, but wishes to make the capitular right of election a reality and the archiepiscopal confirmation of this election an occasion for real examination of the *personam electi* no less than of the *electionis processum.* He proposes to remove the penalty of præmunire attaching at present to failure of compliance in election and confirmation. I am not quite clear whether he is equally emphatic in wishing to remove the right of the Crown to override the dean and chapter by proceeding to appointment by Letters Patent. Nor am I convinced that this reform alone is worth the attempting. Has Mr Mortimer considered the matter from the standpoint of the bishop-designate? In all discussions concerning the fitness of an individual for a particular office, which may result in the rejection of his name, secrecy is the most essential thing. How will this be secured if the royal nomination is submitted to the varying discretion of all the members of the greater chapter of a cathedral? And will divines of eminence and distinction be willing to allow this canvassing of their names to and fro between Downing Street and Barchester? Obviously the royal nomination would not be published until the chapter had elected, or refused, the nominee. I doubt very much whether fit persons would allow this deliberation over their names. Secrecy is much better preserved by private contact between Prime Minister and Primate. Moreover, if changes are to be made, is this a good change? Is the cathedral chapter best qualified to judge of the fitness of a person to be raised to the episcopate? What has become of the voice of the laity? And what has befallen the wider responsibility of the bishop to the Church universal, if his acceptance or rejection is to depend on the verdict of the particular chapter? "Certainly it would

be unwise to raise the question on this single issue"—if Mr Mortimer will pardon the application to this point of his general conclusion concerning the relationship between episcopal nominations and disestablishment. Nor is it by any means sure that Crown and Prime Minister would appreciate the fitness of their sending a series of names to cathedral chapters for possible rejection.

My chief criticism of this proposed scheme of reforms is the small place which is given to the claims of the laity. It is true that Dr Demant in his preface affirms that the authors "felt that it was not proper to deal at length with the question as it affects lay members without much consultation with some of them." Notwithstanding, Dr Jalland makes plain his desire for a further clarification of the functions of the Convocations and of the Church Assembly "so as to make it clear that while the temporal concerns of the Church are rightly assigned to the latter, purely spiritual questions belong to the cognisance of the former and of it alone." Again, in his advocacy of a similar liaison between the diocesan synod and conference, "it might be thought desirable for a line of distinction between the respective spheres of the synod and of the conference to be drawn, similar to the one proposed above, in order to demarcate the scope of the Church Assembly in relation to the Convocations." Mr Coleman's chapter on "The Status of the Laity" carefully avoids transgressing this limit. But it is very doubtful whether the laity can be consigned to the deliberation only of temporal matters and excluded from "purely spiritual questions." A church which may take pride in the allegiance of such laymen of theological learning as Dr Edwyn Bevan, Dr Clement Webb, Sir Will Spens, and Professor A. E. Taylor may hesitate before excluding them from matters of doctrine which it submits to the suffrages of clerical proctors in convocation whose theological attainments may not exceed those demanded by G.O.E. More urgent is the question of public worship; for it is impossible to pretend that divine service is a matter for the clergy alone and not for the laity. Fr Blair's consideration of the difficulties arising from sudden changes in the ordering of public worship in parish churches due to changes of incumbent is characterized by apparent lack of appreciation of the interests of the laity in this matter of vital concern to them. It is therefore very doubtful whether this boundary between clergy and laity and between spiritual and temporal questions can be maintained. Dr Jalland recognizes that the influence of a purely temporal question (that of taxation) has given to the lower houses of the English provincial convocations an absolute veto on the proceedings of the upper houses, and that "we may not plead in this matter the support of catholic precedent" but "can defend it only as of local application." The episode may suggest a parallel relationship between money and rights in respect of the laity. If the laity are to be asked to undertake wide financial responsibility for the training and maintenance of the ministry, it will be difficult to refuse to them a voice in the ordering of public worship. At present the House of Laity in the Church Assembly can hold up any project of Prayer Book revision by refusing consent; and it is easier to envisage the extension of their power than its further curtailment. Among the recommended reforms

of this symposium the laity figure positively in respect of greater financial responsibilities; but otherwise Mr Coleman wishes to substitute a confirmation for a baptismal qualification for the electoral rolls, and Dr Jalland wishes to draw a firm line between temporal and spiritual questions, reserving the latter solely for the clergy. It may be noticed that, in some other churches of the Anglican Communion, the powers of the laity are considerably greater than in England, and that this characteristic is noteworthy in non-established churches.

Common ground between this group of essays and the report of a Commission of the Church Assembly is to be found in the complex of questions concerning parochial endowments and the parson's freehold. Mr Casserley does not view with favour a centralized pool of ecclesiastical revenues, but prefers some measure of redistribution of surplus endowments. In this connexion he makes one point of outstanding importance—namely, that individual benefactors are more often moved by the appeal of some local need with which they are or can be personally concerned than by exhortation to support a central organization. It is vitally necessary to ensure the continuance of this local patriotism, for if personal and individual relationships evaporate in the Church it is difficult to conceive how they can survive elsewhere. It would be disastrous if individual and local needs were wholly supplanted by central organization. The Bishop of Chichester's committee go some way to meet this standpoint.

> We think that it is important that benefices, which may legitimately remain as separate benefices, should retain their endowments so far as this is consistent with the interests of the diocese and of the church of England as a whole.

On the other hand they rightly point out that "pooling" has now a century of experience and history to recommend it. Hitherto it has been at the expense of cathedral endowments and to the profit of parochial benefices. Now it should be extended to them.

> In this respect the endowments of individual benefices are not in any different category from those of other ecclesiastical corporations. The propriety of pooling and alienating surpluses wherever found, in order to reduce a deficiency elsewhere, has been the basis of legislation consistently over the last hundred years, as occasion offered or required.

The commission is therefore of opinion

> that one primary condition of progress in dealing with the pay and distribution of the clergy would be the acceptance of the idea of pooling—diocese by diocese—benefice endowment and capital trust funds for the maintenance of the ministry, the income from which should, in the interests of the Church of England as a whole, no longer be retained by certain benefices.

Accordingly the commission recommends that

> the diocesan authority should have power to initiate proposals for the appropriation of the surplus income of any benefice in the diocese the income of which appears to the diocesan authority and the bishop to be more than sufficient for its needs;

and that

> any money so appropriated should be paid to the central authority and carried to a special fund with separate diocesan accounts for each diocese.

The ideal of the commission is to raise the net income of each incumbent to £400 per annum; and to this end not only financial readjustments will have to be made but provision for further union of parishes, for institution of incumbents (with their free consent) for a period of years only, though no specific recommendation is made for other change in the parson's freehold, for powers to be given to the bishop to refuse institution where an adequate income is not forthcoming, and for dealing with over-large parsonage houses. In order to retain and stimulate local benefactions the commission wishes to encourage the provision of grants from central funds in proportion to the amounts raised locally by parochial efforts. The commission is opposed to the plan which commends itself to Dr Demant's group of compulsory taxation of the larger benefice incomes for the benefit of poorer, and also to the taxation of private gifts and bequests to benefices already sufficiently endowed. I am not able to see the force of these objections, for a provision for (say) a compulsory tax of 5 per cent. upon local benefactions for the benefit of diocesan funds would not seem more arbitrary or inequitable than the commission's suggestion of the appropriation by the diocese of the surplus income of any benefice. It is essential to continue the spirit of local benefaction and to preserve the individual and personal association between benefactor and parish; and the proposal of a graduated tax on such gifts for the profit of diocesan funds seems as equitable and smooth a means as any other.

The commission has steered a middle way between the "full revolutionary programme" advocated in some quarters, which it believes not to be "practical politics," and a policy of wait and see which finds favour in other quarters. It is probably true that their programme of moderate reform is practical politics—that is, has a better chance of acceptance than a wider scheme. This does not mean that it is not open to modification in detail. No disagreement will be anticipated with the desire both of Dr Demant's group and of the commission to improve the position of the unbeneficed clergy; and measures to ensure adequate financial provision for them both in and out of employment as assistant curates are long overdue.

Both reports end as they begin with a recognition of the overriding necessity for the stimulation of the laity to undertake greater responsibility for the financial training and maintenance of the clergy and to raise large sums of money for this purpose. Both Dr Demant's group and the Bishop of Chichester's commission recognize that their proposals are only means to an end, and that end is the improvement of the quality of the clergy. Here lies the rub: how to secure better clergy and at the same time to allow to the laity that greater share in the ordering of the life and worship of the Church which must correspond with the greater demands made on their financial support. Upon the attainment of a harmonious co-operation between an improved clergy and a more responsible laity the future wellbeing of the Church of England largely depends.

N. Sykes.

Oxford.

The Country Parson as Casuist

Now, if a shepherd know not which grass will bane and which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd? Wherefore the parson hath thoroughly canvassed all the particulars of human actions, at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his parish.—GEORGE HERBERT: *A Priest to the Temple.*

I

Do we not need a new branch of casuistry to deal with problems which arise out of national planning? Country people nowadays live in two worlds, a world of personal relationships in small groups such as the family, the Church, the village, and a world of impersonal relationships in a planned society, the nation.

The farmer will be the last to deny that his life and work are subject to national planning. He must furnish every quarter an exact account of the number of his animals and of the crops which are grown in his fields; he must disclose the amount of food in his granaries, and the straw in his stacks; everything he has, down to the last roll of binder twine, must go down on the form which furnishes the information for the planners. He is told what he must do with his fields, how much must be ploughed out, how many acres must be planted with potatoes. He cannot feed his animals on what he likes, but on what he can get in exchange for his coupons. He is told how many pigs he may kill, how much petrol he may have for his mill; the prices are fixed at which he may sell his fat stock and his grain, and he cannot choose to whom he sells them. He will say, and sometimes with resentment, that he is working for the Government—a hind, but a hind who must stand the losses. He does not escape from planning when he comes home from the fields; his food is rationed, his profits are taxed, and the ways in which he may spend the money which remains to him are limited. His children are educated according to plan, and perhaps he may soon be embraced by a planned system of national insurance from the cradle to the grave.

Can cases of conscience arise within this planned world? It is a sound principle that a man should not break the law of the land, unless he is convinced on reflection that he is right in doing so. While it may quite possibly be right to disregard an emergency regulation and to risk the consequences, if one is convinced that such an action conforms to standards of equity which are not expressed in the law, it can never be right to break the law on grounds of self-interest alone. No doubt there are unlimited possibilities of confusion between self-interest and equity, and a man may be wrong when he follows his conscience to break the law. But whether his action be right or wrong, it is a case of conscience; and every breach of the law, even though the law be expressed in forms which are rough, ready, and perhaps temporary—every breach of the law is a proper subject for casuistry.

If this is a true account of the matter, it is plain that in a planned world, fashioned by regulations which are from time to time modified in the light of experience gained in their practical working, cases of

conscience arise on every hand. If the farmer kills for himself three pigs when only two are permitted, if he applies for more petrol than he could use in order to get what he needs, if his wife uses flour to help to feed her poultry, all these actions are cases of conscience, whether or not they are so recognized. And this recognition happens quite often; the farmer's eagerness to justify the slaughter of the third pig, his assertion that nowadays it is impossible to be honest, his wife's attempt to treat the whole matter with a smile as something not worth taking seriously, all are signs of an uneasy conscience.

It may not be so plain, but it is none the less true, that one's attitude towards this whole body of regulations is itself a case of conscience. Among the farming community, the whole system of planning, save for that part of it which deals with fixed prices for grain and fat stock and with minimum wages, is regarded with distaste and sometimes with resentment. Though the prices may be considered unfair, and the wages thought to be too low or too high, there appears to be small objection to control in these matters. But the control exercised by the county committees is unwelcome; and many other parts of the planned system are regarded at best with grudging tolerance and at the worst considered as annoying restrictions to be evaded whenever possible. Is this attitude right or wrong? Should it be regarded as just or as a spiritual temptation? Here is a case of conscience of the first importance. It is no good dodging the question, or deciding it by a stubbornness devoid of reflection. It makes all the difference in the world whether people look with resentment upon the planned system of controls, or whether they approach it with the conviction that though immature in detail it is right in principle and a proper and social expression of neighbourly love. It is quite romantic to suppose that this question of the right attitude towards planning is simple; and it is mischievous to think that it is wholly a question of technique, not at all a moral question, and therefore not a subject for casuistry.

The casuistry which deals with personal relationships is inadequate to cope with matters of this sort. In the first place, as it stands it is irrelevant. The command to love thy neighbour is plainly and profoundly relevant to the life of a small village; nobody knows this better than country people, who daily show quite amazing love in helping each other in times of sickness or misfortune. But it is not at all obvious that this command is relevant to a planned society. How does the farmer hurt his neighbour if he kills one pig more than the law allows? It is not apparent that he robs his unseen neighbour of food, for with pig prices as they are and meal hard to get, he would probably never have fattened the animal had it not been intended for himself. It is not clear to him how he hurts his neighbour by the nicely calculated deception which secures him the petrol which he needs. It may be that the joyful participation in the requirements of social planning is an expression of neighbourly love; but this view has more truth than evidence, and a good deal of work must be done before the duties which arise from neighbourly love in a planned society become apparent. It is romantic to assume that every regulation is such a perfect expression of that love that the parson need only say "obey it."

And it is equally romantic to suppose that, if any regulation were in this way perfect, it would be generally recognized as such. The farmer who in private life is a good neighbour may not perceive the neighbourliness expressed in national planning.

The casuistry which deals with personal relationships is further inadequate, because it relies upon the emotions rather than upon reflection to get itself practised. It does not, of course, dispense with the appeal to intellect and reflection, but it relies on finding in the person addressed an emotional disposition which is its ally rather than its enemy. This disposition has its ground in village custom, and is strengthened through relationships which are personal. It is easier to feel and to practise a neighbourly obligation to the man whom one knows than towards the thousands whom one never meets. The goodness which country folk show towards each other is not generally reflective; it is spontaneous and draws its strength from village custom and personal fellowship. Now the casuistry which deals with those relationships which arise within a planned society cannot appeal so forcibly to these very powerful sources of right action, for society as a whole cannot experience such a measure of fellowship as arises in a small group of people who live and work together. The force of custom works both ways: it opposes planning as something new, it supports it in so far as the countryman is by tradition patriotic, law-abiding, and obedient. The system of regulations issued under the plea of national necessity appealed strongly to this patriotism and could not have been worked without it. The appeal to patriotism will not be so useful once the threat of an external enemy is removed, but the appeal to obedience will always be forcible with country people. Of course, the threat of punishment is always powerful, but it would not suffice to secure general co-operation without the general reverence for the law of the land. This reverence is an immense help in the transition from a chaotic to a planned society. But people will not indefinitely put up with restrictions which they resent unless they can see some sense in them. Co-operation in a planned society requires in the long run habits of reflective action quite foreign to village life; and the casuistry of the planned society will at first appear to country people as something strange and foreign which finds no welcome in their hearts.

II

Does not this situation present a challenge to the country parson? The common-sense view would be that if he avoids these matters he fails in his pastoral duty. Country people will think either that the parson cannot in these cases distinguish between right and wrong or that he has not tried to do so. Either he does not know "which grass will bane and which will not" or he has not taken the trouble to find out.

The business is admittedly difficult. It cannot be adequately settled by a simple injunction to obey the law. When a system of regulations is in an experimental and fluid stage of development, it will be likely to include some directions which are manifestly unjust and which may

rightly be disregarded. Moreover, it would be unbecoming for the parson to stress an undeviating obedience to the law of the land, when he himself probably deviates from it each Sunday in the conduct of public worship. At the same time, if the parson is convinced that all this planning gropes for a social expression of neighbourly love, let him say this, and encourage in his people a spirit of general and cheerful co-operation with the new regulations.

It is not easy to be a casuist in these matters without also being a farmer; and the country parson who works his own smallholding, part of his glebe, for example, will gain both interest and insight in these matters which otherwise will be hard to come by. In any case, he will be careful to talk things over with the people whom he guides, and this care has a pastoral value. For the farmer who has little interest in redemption and cannot easily be enticed to church may have in his heart a surprising passion for justice and be not only willing but even eager to discuss these things with the parson, by the fire, near the stack, or behind the plough. It was the merit of Socrates that he could philosophize with artisans and all sorts of people, in the market place, or wherever he found them. Would it not also be a merit in the country parson if he could share the farmer's tea in the shelter of the half-completed haystack, and there lay the foundations of his casuistry?

Both the Scriptures which the parson studies and the tradition of the Church in which he ministers impel him to some such course of action. For though the Scriptures speak first of redemption, they also show a deep concern for relative justice. And if the Church of England has sometimes seemed to follow the practice of some other Protestant churches in withdrawing from social action, this has perhaps been an aberration from its tradition. Both its friends and its enemies have thought that it ought to be the conscience of the nation, and it has not disowned that responsibility. The country parson cannot therefore refuse to guide his people in cases of conscience which arise in national planning without separating himself from the traditions of the Established Church at its best.

Yet such casuistry and guidance is not his main duty. He is the witness of redemption, proclaimed and offered through the Word and the Sacrament. And because social planning is not redemption, concern with it cannot replace concern with eternal life as revealed in the Scriptures. Christianity speaks of better things than the rearrangement of society; and the parson tells his people about a redemption which can be had through no social order, but only through Christ. He will often remind them of the element of sin which infects all human endeavours, and tell them that every arrangement of society, however well planned and however just, is like their bodies, which, though in good health, contain within themselves the seeds of their own decay. And thus the good pastor will both guide his people in their present social duties and also draw their hearts and hopes towards that redeemed society which cannot be made perfect without the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

A. C. Scupholme.

Ugthorpe.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FIGURE OF BEATRICE: A STUDY IN DANTE. By Charles Williams. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

In that beautiful book *The Early Italian Poets* Dante Gabriel Rossetti, speaking of the *Vita Nuova* as a preparation (this is Edmund Gardner's word) for the *Divina Commedia*, tells us, as only a poet can tell us, that "throughout the *Vita Nuova* there is a strain like the first falling murmur which reaches the ear in some remote meadow, and prepares us to look upon the sea." *Vita Nuova*, *Convivio*, *Divina Commedia*—this is the succession, and what wonder that a poet of our own time should be led to bring his own fine and reverent understanding to bear on the figure of Beatrice, which appears at the beginning, and is at the end, of Dante's poetry and Dante's experience?

It might well seem that the courtly love of the Middle Ages was little better than a blasphemous parody of the love of the human soul for God. This was perceived by Guido Guincelli, whom Dante calls his "father" and one "who used ever sweet and pleasant rhymes of love." He pictures God as asking him to justify this love, given to a creature instead of to Himself or to the Queen of Heaven; and he pleads:

> As though from Thee he came,
> Love wore an angel's face:
> Lord, if I loved her, count it not my shame.

It is Guido's praise that he taught Dante how this love could be something excellent and "gentle," and a way of ascent to the Highest Good. In the *Vita Nuova*, the *Convivio*, and the *Commedia* is set out the story of this ascent, a story not easy to unravel, as the differing conclusions of commentators show. And Dante does not make it any the more easy, especially in the *Convivio*, that unfinished treatise in which he comments on certain love poems, addressed originally to earthly loves, and now referred allegorically to his "second love"—Philosophy. He had attempted an impossible task of reconciliation, and he wisely abandoned it, returning to Beatrice in the *Commedia*, Beatrice, who is, according to the letter (shall we say?), the girl he had seen in his boyhood and adolescence in Florence, and was yet, spiritually, the Divine Wisdom, which makes men wise unto salvation. And Dante himself, the human lover, as Edmund Gardner has said, yet "represents all mankind," or, in the words of Karl Witte: "The poet stands as the type of the whole race of fallen man, called to salvation."

But Mr Williams wishes to take us further and deeper than this, to nothing less than to the fullest and completest meaning of Dante's *Commedia*, "since poetry," as he says, "is apt to hold much more than even the poets know." So he can suggest that "the *Paradiso* would be, for unfallen natures, the normal development of human romantic love; and being so, must remain even for our fallen natures a matter of perpetual study. . . . The passage through the Paradises is the true passage and history of Love—impossible to men and women because of sin,

but comprehensible to the 'nobile intelletto,' the intellect of the noble life, and even in a sense, after repentance, possible to it."

But how can we bring ourselves to believe this, in spite of Mr Williams's persuasiveness? Is it not possible to argue that the Way of Affirmation, the approach to God through images, and images of flesh, is indeed a perilous way, the way of Platonism, the way of man's presumption as distinct from the truly Christian way, which is the way of man's nothingness, of God's all-sufficiency and free grace, of man's submission and God's initiative, the way of the Church and the Sacraments?

We do not deny that the whole creation if we see it with a purified heart is, in the words of Thomas à Kempis, "a mirror of life, and a book of holy teaching." This is the Catholic way of regarding the creatures. But the "sweet, new stile" in Italy took another course, because it began not from God, but from woman. "L'amata non è donna, ma angelo," sang Chiaro d'Avanzati. By a marvellous *tour de force* Dante managed to fit the figure of Beatrice into the scheme of his *Commedia*, but she was, so to speak, a special case, and, after all, he was writing poetry. One of the first things we have to do in the Christian life is to "die the death of the creatures." Only so can we really love them and receive them back from God.

> All which I took from thee, I did but take,
> Not for thy harms
> But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.

This is not to deny the possibility or, indeed, the necessity of that "true love," *agape*, between men and women, which may begin from romantic love, whether in or outside marriage; but must not continue as romantic love unless it is to be unreal and unfruitful. It must, as Augustine says in his treatise *De bono coniugali*, grow towards that *caritas*, that supernatural charity, to which it should aspire for its own permanence and safety, which lie alone in this transformation.

We may begin with images, but surely not with the "affirmation of images." And Mr Williams is right when he confesses, "it seems likely that Saint Thomas would have found some difficulty in appreciating Dante's whole Beatrician scheme." But whether we assent to Mr Williams's exposition of that scheme or not, it is certain that he provides as well a commentary on the *Commedia* which exhibits more profound moral and spiritual insights than have so far been brought to bear upon a poem inexhaustible in its richness and possibility of meaning for each generation.

F. J. E. Raby.

Hawarden.

The Judicial Office and Other Matters. By the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Slesser. Hutchinson. 15s.

At this time, when specialization in scholarship has gone to extreme lengths, and when, in the sociological sphere, the different maladjustments in the social order have been separately analysed, it is not surprising that the most valuable synthesis of all this material should come

from Christian writers. Particularly in sociology we have become accustomed to works which bring the most diverse matters within the scope of Catholic orthodoxy. Sir Henry Slesser, with an embarrassing wealth of detail, performs here a similar work of integration, but, while we find a considerable bias towards sociology, the initial impulse comes from a new direction—the relation of the judge's office to the "ultimate sanctions of Natural Law and Christian obligation."

It is difficult and indeed unfair to attempt to do full justice in a brief review to a book which includes scholarly discussion of such topics as the place of St Thomas Aquinas in Christian Philosophy, the nature of judicial functions, and the social implications of the concept of the Kingdom of God; it is equally difficult to isolate one or two lines of thought from a book of such scope. Perhaps the most important of Sir Henry's concerns is with the decay of objectively valid principles in all spheres of human activity, and the rise of subjective individualism. To this the author opposes a Christian standard of action with constant reference back to the Catholic interpretation of Natural Law. In view of this uniformity of purpose it is unfortunate that the title of the book should imply a mere collection of essays; for although the subjects within the two sections, Political and Philosophic, appear of such great variety, they form part of one coherent plea for a return to an objective, "transcendental" standard of action in society.

The core of the work is the valuable essay on the Judicial Office, which analyses the methods of applying general legal principles to the body of collected evidence. These methods are shown to be frequently relative to "the usages and needs of society at the time of the litigation" and to have no immediate relevance to any absolute standards. This section is thus directed towards the possibility of a jurisprudence based on Christian—Thomist—principles. It is from this central inquiry that the two other presiding concepts of the book, those of the Kingdom of God and of Natural Law, take their significance. For the author refuses to keep the eternal and the secular orders entirely apart. In the chapter "The Conflict in the Secular" the tension between the claims of the world and of the Civitas Dei is shown to be a very real one, but capable of resolution within the Church. The sharpening of this tension since the Reformation and the solution of the problem are both illustrated in the following passage:

> Throughout Europe the Catholic Church, having parted with so much of its mission to Princes and secular politicians, was in a condition of decrepitude; nor could it appeal, as might the rising force of evangelicals among the Protestants, to the individual Christian sense. Institutional as they are, Catholics must act corporately, and, if they evade their duty to the world, the very associative nature of their institution is itself a weakness.

Throughout the book, and following naturally from the doctrine of the Incarnation, one of the corollaries of which is that "History and Event are not to be regarded . . . either as unreal or inherently evil," historical analysis is accepted as a basic method for examining all the dominant concepts. The compression which this method imposes produces many generalizations of the utmost importance, but it can

also produce dangerous "snap judgments" ("Rousseau . . . the critic of all civilization," "Innovating fascist cavaliers"), which, however lively and provocative they may frequently be, invite both expansion and counter-argument.

It is a great pity that such an important and stimulating work should have to conform to an "authorized economy standard," with so many signs of hasty production and inadequate proof-reading.

W. M. MERCHANT.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CARDIFF.

HISTORY OF ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, TENBURY. Edited by M. F. Alderson and H. C. Colles. S.P.C.K. 5s.

I confess that, until I read this book, St Michael's College, Tenbury, was little more than a name to me. Not only do I now know a good deal about it, but I mean to visit it, if ever I get the opportunity. It was founded by the Rev. Sir Frederick A. Gore Ouseley in 1856, and was a product of the Tractarian Movement. In the collegiate church, which is also a parish church, the services are daily sung according to cathedral standards. The school, which originally consisted mainly of choristers, has grown in size, and is now much like an ordinary preparatory school. This book provides an interesting account of the Founder, who was a remarkable character, of the establishment and development of the College, of the Library (there is a very fine music library), and of the architecture of the buildings. It is a model of what such a compilation ought to be.

A. R. V.

THE MONASTIC IDEAL. By W. J. Sparrow Simpson. C.L.A. 1s. 3d.

This little pamphlet is the result of reflection by its author on the jubilee last year of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield. He places the revival of the religious life in the Anglican Church within the context of European monasticism, and is concerned to show that "the general level of devotion in the Church at large depends very greatly indeed on the level of devotion within the religious communities." We are given pleasing glimpses of the great Mirfield Fathers, notably of Neville Figgis. Dr Sparrow Simpson directs his appeal especially to Protestants and Free Churchmen, in the hope that they may follow Harnack and their own best theologians in a true appreciation of the value of the religious life.

W. O. CHADWICK.

Note

FR VICTOR WHITE, O.P., is taking over the "Summa Theologica Lectures" which used to be given in London by Fr Vincent McNabb. They will begin on October 7 and continue on subsequent Thursdays at 6.45 p.m. Further particulars can be obtained from Miss Finlayson, 24, Primrose Hill Road, London, N.W. 3.